



DOC's Donahue visits Rushville Rotary Club

Kevin L. Green

— Indiana Department of Correction Commissioner J. David Donahue spoke to members of the Rushville Rotary Club and their guests Tuesday at the Flatrock Grill.

Noting that 17,000 DOC inmates will be released in the State of Indiana this year, Donahue said that not all of them are “bad people.”

“Good people make poor choices sometimes,” he said. “And that’s the case with many of those incarcerated.”

There are 32 prisons in the state and those facilities employ 9,000 people.

Indiana averages a 3.5 percent increase in its inmate population annually, he said, adding that by 2015 4,000 new beds will be needed to house the growing inmate population.

Bringing the matter closer to home, at present there are 73 Rush Countians spending time at a DOC facility, the commissioner said. Of those, 66 are men and seven are women.

Of those released from a DOC facility, four out of 10 will fail and eventually be returned to prison.

Donahue would like to improve on that number.

“Twenty-two of those from Rush County currently serving time are incarcerated because of drugs or some kind of drug-related offense. What is Rush County doing about its drug problem?” he asked.

Donahue said there are three primary obstacles recently released inmates face: housing, transportation and employment. If they can’t find a place to live, a job, or a way to get back and forth there’s a good chance they are going to go back to their former behavior end up back in jail, he said.

More emphasis needs to be placed on providing a transition from incarceration to being a productive member of society, he said.

With that in mind, Donahue suggested law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, judges, community leaders and other interested persons visit the Web site www.reentry.in.gov. [<http://www.IN.gov/indcorrection/reentry/>]

“This Web site contains information about what we are doing to address problems faced by the recently released,” he said.

Donahue was appointed Commissioner of the Indiana Department of Correction by Gov. Mitchell E. Daniels Jr. in January 2005.

He has 26 years experience in corrections including service with the Federal Bureau of Prisons, local government and private corrections. Donahue has worked at several facilities throughout the United States. His experience ranges from working as a Correctional Officer with the Federal Bureau of Prisons to running two prisons as a warden, conducting numerous audits for the American Correctional Association (ACA) and most recently, serving as the Deputy Commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Correction.

Since January 2005, Donahue has operated the Indiana Department of Correction on a flat-line budget, while implementing innovative re-entry programs and maintaining public safety. His leadership, correctional methodology and innovative solutions have gained nation-wide recognition.

Donahue continues to build key relationships with state and local agencies, as well as community partnerships to improve the offender re-entry process.

A native of Bardstown, Ky., Donahue received his Bachelor's Degree in Police Administration and Criminal Justice from Eastern Kentucky University and graduate course work at Spaulding University.

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Indiana Department of Correction Commissioner J. David Donahue (second from left) answers a question from Rushville Rotarian Donald Blume (third from left) as Rotarian Debbie Turner (left) and Rushville Chief of Police Tony Fudge listen.